



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

OFFICE OF THE COORDINATOR OF FISHERIES

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Landings of tuna for the first quarter of 1943 were approximately 40 percent greater than in the same period of 1942 but are still considerably below normal, Harold L. Ickes, Coordinator of Fisheries, announced today.

Landings reported for the first three months of the year totaled 8,372,837 pounds as against 5,962,135 for 1942's first quarter.

The increase in the tuna catch, however, will probably not result in the return of the tuna fish salad sandwich to the nation's drugstore counters since this year government requirements will take 60 percent of the tuna pack. Last year tuna was not bought for the armed services or lend-lease account.

The 1942 production was abnormally low due to the many restrictions on tuna fishing placed in effect as soon as we went to war. Some of these restrictions have been modified and the higher total for the first quarter of 1943 has resulted.

Not only have security restrictions affected the tuna catch, the industry has also suffered markedly due to the fact that its largest and finest vessels have been taken over by the armed services.

Although some tuna fishing is done near our coasts particularly the west, the largest amount is done in waters off Mexico, Central, and South America. In order to fish in these waters vessels have to be able to go anywhere on the high seas, be equipped for extended stays, and have elaborate refrigerating equipment to keep the catch in good condition until it reaches the cannery. The American tuna fleet is composed of some of the finest, largest, and most expensive fishing vessels in the world. It is not uncommon for a vessel in this fleet to cost as much as \$250,000.

With 40 percent of the fleet's vessels now in service, tuna fishermen have had to use smaller and less well-equipped boats. Current prices for tuna and tuna-like fishes have, however, encouraged fishermen to make the maximum use of such equipment as they have. Albacore, which is caught chiefly off the Northwest coast, has a price set at \$325 a ton. Yellowfin, the variety which is the mainstay of the clipper fleet, brings \$200 a ton. Striped tuna is priced at \$180 and bluefin at \$190 a ton. The two tuna-like fishes, bonita and yellowtail, bring \$155 and \$145 a ton respectively.